

Home Circle.

THE USED-TO-BE.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Beyond the purple, hazy trees
Of summer's utmost boundaries;
Beyond the sands—beyond the seas—
Beyond the range of eyes like these,
And only in the reach of the
Enraptured gaze of Memory,
There lies a land, long lost to me—
The land of Used-to-be!

A land enchanted—such as swung
In golden seas when sirens clung
Along their dripping brinks, and sung
To Jason in that mystic tongue
That dazed men with its melody—
O such a land, with such a sea
Kissing its shores eternally,
Is the fair Used-to-be.

A land where music ever girds
The air with belts of singing birds,
And sows all sounds with such sweet words,
That even in the low of herds
A meaning lives so sweet to me,
Lost laughter ripples limpidly
From lips brimmed over with the glee
Of rare old Used-to-be.

Lost laughter, and the whistled tunes
Of boyhood's mouth of crescent runes,
That rounded, through long afternoons,
To serenading plenilunes—
When starlight fell so mistily
That, peering up from bended knee,
I dreamed 'twas bridal drapery
Snowed over Used-to-be.

O land of love and dreamy thoughts,
And shining fields, and shady spots
Of coolest, greenest grassy plots,
Embossed with wild forget-me-nots!
And all ye blooms that longingly
Lift your fair faces up to me
Out of the past, I kiss in ye
The lips of Used-to-be.

"MOTHER'S ROOM."

VIRGINIA SHEFFEY HALLER.

"As mother is blind, it will make no difference if I put her in that north room which has but the half window," said a thoughtless daughter, anticipating a visit of indefinite duration from that stricken old mother.

I thought of the blue lips, indicating impoverished circulation; of the tremulous hands and feet through which the blood ran so sluggishly—would they find encouraging warmth in that poorly heated, badly ventilated chamber, never reached by sunshine? Must those stiffened, arching joints grope up the narrow, unsafe stairway, and along an irregular hall to gain the allotted cell? O, the icy pang which must shock the blind woman's sensitive nerves, as she tottered into her inhospitable sleeping quarters! The interference was, evidently, considered officious, but the appeal in her behalf could not be restrained. Derisive smiles and

incredulity were the answers; so the unappreciated guest was led to her apartment, whence she was carried, after several months' discomfort, to a yet narrower, chillier, darker room, with the heart frozen in her bosom which had been uncheered by a daughter's consideration; the thin hands no longer groping for warmth and sympathy, were patiently, rigidly folded; and the blinded eyes failed to perceive that there was no sunlight in her last resting place, though she had been subtly conscious of its lack in her daughter's house. That daughter was not, naturally, hard-hearted, nor deliberately unkind; but she was criminally thoughtless and selfish in her unfilial conduct towards her who should have been the honored guest of her daintiest room instead of her poorest. Other visitors enjoyed the more desirable chambers, because they could see the pretty furniture, and admire the attractive views from the large windows, for how true it seems that unto those who have, more shall be given! It might be asserting too much to say that the choice of rooms shortened the mother's life, but beyond a doubt, her last few weeks of life would have been happier had she not realized that her own child harshly discriminated against her in her helplessness.

Friends, your mothers may not be poor, old and blind; but, under all circumstances, if possible, let "mother's room" be the most thoughtfully selected, tenderly cared for, of your homes, that you and she may be spared heart-pangs, some sad day, when she realizes that her tenure upon earthly joy is slight, and you, seeing her drifting away from you, must ask yourselves: "Is everything being done for her happiness, in return for all she has done for us? Ah, fortunate will you be, if conscience cannot approach you!"

Beyond question from any who still have the treasure of a mother's presence in their home, "mother's room" should be the best ventilated, lightest room in the house. Can a house be to us more than an unsatisfactory abiding place, without that blessing to illuminate and crown it? There can be no true home without the mother's room where the little ones may find comfort in their sorrows where lads and lassies may seek counsel from unfailing stores of wisdom and love; where young men and maidens may safely confide to her tender interest the sweet dreams of happy visions of their opening lives! Then, while she is with you, see that her room, in Winter, receives the sun's brightest beams, and you may be sure of obtaining your share when you seek communion with her, so lovingly will she treasure them for you and radiate

them for your need. There is no danger that she will bestow grudgingly, on the contrary, she is to be closely watched, lest she de'raud herself, like the bird that bares its breast of plumage to make the nest warm and soft for its young. Let her room be carefully tempered that the sun may not smite her by day, nor the moon disturb her rest at night. See that she is not fevered by Summer's heat, nor blighted by Winter's frosts; for, when her room is vacant, darkened, hushed and cheerless, all the world is empty and desolate, mocking bereavement's out-stretched, pleading arms! Those who know, in all its bitterness, what it is to be motherless, alone can realize how little pleasure the loveliest apartment can bestow, if they are haunted by the undying reproach: "Had I brought her here where she would have had pleasant surroundings, and felt that her happiness was my chief concern, that I loved her enough to give up anything that would contribute to it, perhaps she would have lived many years longer—might still be with me."

If envenomed reflection is coiled beside the downiest pillow upon which we seek repose, its deadly fangs will infuse never ending regret into our veins.

UNDER THE BLUE UMBRELLA.

The day had been very hot, and my friend was very, very ill. My way home that night led through the outskirts of Jersey City. Vacant lots strewn with refuse, untidy, dilapidated houses, dirty, unkempt children—I was turning from the car window in weariness when I caught sight of a group of willows bursting into early leaf. Under them, upon the newly springing grass, walked a woman holding in her arms a little baby. She was sheltering it from the sun with an old blue cotton umbrella; there was mother love in the encircling arms, and a mother's hope and prophecy in the eyes which looked down so tenderly into the little face resting upon her breast. It was only the outskirts of a busy, rushing nineteenth century city, but for the moment it was the holy hillside of Nazareth too, and the promise of hope and comfort which came to earth so many years ago came again through one of the least of His little ones.—Margaret Jackson.

Nearness of life to the Saviour will necessarily involve greatness of love to Him. As nearness to the sun increases the temperature of the various planets, so near and intimate communion with Jesus raises the heat of the soul's affections toward Him.—Spurgeon.

Luck dreams of a home, while work builds one.